

Governor's Cabinet on Chronic & Long Term Care

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Meeting Notes

Members Present:

**Corinne Calise Russo, Director, Department of Elderly Affairs,
Co-Chair**

**Jane A. Hayward, Secretary, Executive Office of Health & Human
Services**

Ronald A. Lebel, Esq., Director, Department of Human Services

Adelita Orefice, Director, Department of Labor & Training

Rollin Bartlett, designee, Department of Business Regulation

Donald C. Williams, designee, Department of Health

Bob Cooper

Marie Straus

Mary A. Ciano

Joan D'Agostino

Paula Lipsey

Alan Tavares

Bob McDonough

Kathleen Heron

Paula Parker

Russell Gifford

Cynthia Conant-Arp

Welcome and Introductions

**Corinne Calise Russo, Director, Department of Elderly Affairs,
Co-Chair**

Chairwoman Russo opened the meeting at 1:10 p.m. with welcoming remarks and a review of the previous Cabinet meeting minutes for any additions and/or corrections. The meeting minutes of the January 12, 2006 were approved without change.

The Point Update

Joan D'Agostino presented a brief report on the status of The Point. She stated that it is continuing to grow and that there were 2110 calls in the month of February; which brings the daily average to 88 calls per day. February also marked the month for the lowest number of abandonment rate. Joan stated that the primary reason for the influx of calls was due to the implementation of Medical Assistance as a secondary payer to Medicare Part D. Prior to the change in Medical Assistance coverage as secondary payer, incorrect payments made by Medicare Part D on the claims for the dually eligible clients caused the dramatic influx of calls in the previous month (January). In March Medical Assistance will no longer cover the dually eligible. Joan continued with an update on outreach efforts, which has included letters to the legislators and Rhode Island congressional delegation explaining the services and the existence of The Point. Dr. Gifford has offered to send out letters to the Rhode Island doctors with information as well as order forms for The Point services.

There will be continued training of The Point staff including training

about disabled adults as well as Food Stamps.

Director Russo asked if the group had any questions. It was asked what The Point abandonment rate was before January. It was stated that the abandonment rate for January was 396 calls, February was 51 calls. This decrease in the number of calls is attributed to the continuous message played during the wait/hold period. Director Russo added that the Department of Elderly Affairs is working with the Department of Human Services' social workers and that they are referring people to The Point with those questions.

Medicare Part D in the Minority Community

Delia Rodriguez reported that with regard to minority outreach, The Point could respond in Spanish as well as have the ability to access an interpreter. There are great resources in the community and further updated the group that later in March there is African- NAACP Fair scheduled at Rhode Island College. In April there will be a series of presentations in/for: Chinese /Mandarin & Cantonese, Portuguese, Latino and African communities. DEA is trying to increase the level of volunteers with the communities as well. Delia asked the group to please let her know if there are any questions. At this point in the meeting, Jane Hayward asked Delia to reach out to Representative Dias; as she had called Jane the day before regarding the Medicare Part D Community meetings, saying that the community meeting that had been scheduled for the DiVinci Center in Providence was not her district. Delia said she would be happy to call the Representative, but

also wanted Jane to know that there was already an informational/community meeting at the Elmwood Community Center.

As the discussion continued, Director Russo stated that she had received a call from the RI Food Bank who said that they are finding that there are older people going in to the food bank who seem to be confused with regard to benefits. Director Russo continued that a meeting is being scheduled to create a strategy/plan to service this population.

Independent Transportation Network Resolution

Paula Parker stated Senator Tassoni contacted the Department regarding the Independent Transportation Network Resolution and requested the Department to conduct a study. Paula continued that Maine and other states are adopting volunteer services with regard to transportation needs being met that goes beyond state offers. Paula continued that the Resolution was heard last week and passed out of committee. It is a flexible, creative, and innovative program and DEA will keep everyone posted.

Office of Elder Protection

Director Russo updated the group that the Governor's Commission on Aging is also very interested in this initiative and is very willing to help with Elder Protection. Director Russo was pleased to say that the recommendation came out of the Governor's Cabinet on Chronic & Long Term Care; and continued that this will provide a strong foundation for Rhode Island. As part of this initiative, DEA is looking

at an After Hours Response Program for elders and as well as an After Hours Emergency Response System. Paula Parker added that this will be a good opportunity to review the after hours concept for those who have not been at previous meetings. She also stated that this will fill the gap for seniors in crisis after traditional working hours as the program is to have a clinician on call to help with those elders. Generally the police or paramedics now make those calls to DEA with no response.

Update on Abuse and Neglect of Adults with Severe Impairments

Bob Cooper gave an update to the group on the Abuse and Neglect of Elderly Adult's with Severe Impairments, which was requested at the last meeting. Mr. Cooper began his remarks by saying that the information gathered is disturbing and is broken down by disability. He noted that abuse occurs less in males than in females. With regard to the kinds of abuse and neglect, in many cases, these situations can present in the form of withholding services as a means of intimidation. He continued with examples that included women with physical disabilities. He added that the abuse is most times the same as to those without disabilities and could be described as abuse by means of intimidation; examples are: refusal of assistance in the areas of toileting, personal hygiene and feeding by primary caregiver.

There is a hearing scheduled for Tuesday, March 20 on the bill in House Judiciary; the Committee endorsed the concept and is waiting

for the fiscal note. House Finance recommendations changes to the bill, should be mandatory that local police contact the state police. Jane Hayward asked for confirmation that the hearing will be in House Judiciary on Tuesday, which Bob did confirm. The next steps are for a fiscal note, and then for Representative Lally to talk to Chairman Costantino for funding.

Mr. Cooper was thanked for his update by Director Russo who added that this is an issue that will be followed very closely by both he and the Department and again thanked him.

Other Business and Announcements

Director Russo updated the group on a grant that through the Executive Office of Health & Human Services, some months back, called 'Own Your Future' which has no dollars attached and Rhode Island was one of three (3) states to be chosen by Medicare/Medicaid Services. It will target those individuals between 50-70 years old and is intended to help plan for the future. The kick-off of this grant will be soon. Director Russo continued that the federal government is very concerned about people in this particular age range. Those of us in that age span will be receiving a letter from the Governor. Quality Partners has provided the mailing. Participants were asked to pass the word about the initiative. Realize not saving for the future, can cause future concerns. There will be opportunities to send in for a tool kit for planning purposes.

Bob Cooper inquired on the status of the Para-transit system. He said that he had heard about problems especially in the greater Providence and Washington county areas. Jane Hayward also said that EOHHS is hearing some of the same. A meeting last week with RIPTA Jane reported on one of the issues that came out of that meeting were problems with lateness (scheduled stops), drivers were not being helpful and/or sensitive. One example that was given was that of an Alzheimer's person being dropped off at the corner and not directly at their home. One option that has been discussed is reconstituting the Para-transit Taskforce; and the draft Executive Order from 2003 is presently being reviewed and revisited. Particular interest is being paid to: services/cost/parameters and the need to meet on a monthly basis. Jane continued that there needs to be assurances people are getting the services they need. Bob Cooper added his concern around the quality control problem. Jane stated that they are aware of the issues/problems and are in the process of reviewing those issues as well. Director Russo offered that DEA has one point person assigned to the adult day services issue and they are in the process of preparing a briefing document; Director Russo asked Bob if there could be someone who will take responsibility from the community to take the lead? Mr. Cooper stated that he would get in touch with MHRH, who is the primary funder, and see if something could be worked out and said that he was glad to hear a taskforce in some guise will be coming back. He continued that the funder should be the one to decide where the folks are dropped off rather than the provider as it appears now to be happening.

Secretary Hayward stated that people are very happy to help with the training and there needs to be a coordinated effort in putting it together in an effective way.

The discussion continued with Mr. Cooper asking the status of the contract and when it is due. Secretary Hayward stated that it would be due next year, which will give us a good opportunity to bring those folks back for a discussion.

Continuing along that thought, Bob gave an additional area that need to be looked at closer; feeding folks through the public transit system. As an example – my employee lives in Pawtucket, blind, hard of hearing, elderly etc. A van picks her up at same spot as the bus that runs every ½ hour. His employee is very willing to take that bus but as the contract stands, her mode of transportation is the van; which is a 16-passenger vehicle, and she is the only occupant. Clearly this is not a good use of resources and could be freed up for use elsewhere.

Per Jane Hayward, additionally, some of the things being looked at are GPS tracking on vans as well as installing cameras in vehicles. Bob Cooper suggested, and Jane agreed, that folks need to be around a table monthly to prepare for the next contract.

Before Director Russo adjourned the meeting, Director Ron Lebel stated that his understanding with regard to this Legislative Session,

all budget articles will be done by the end of April; and will be posted quickly over the next 3 weeks. He suggested that folks check any bills/articles of interest on the RI General Assembly website daily.

Director Russo formally adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m. and reminded the group that the next Cabinet meeting will be in May.